

Robert H. and Patty Fay House
109 Coleridge Avenue
Llyswen Neighborhood
Altoona
Blair County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-5875

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

ROBERT H. AND PATTY FAY HOUSE

HABS No. PA-5875

Location: 109 Coleridge Avenue

Date of Erection: 1913

Description: This modest but distinctive one-and-a-half-story house displays many classic bungalow characteristics. A wide bargeboard accents the low pitch of the front gable roof and the flare of the eaves, supported by exposed bowed rafters. Other horizontal effects include distinctive banding at the first story cornice line, punctuated by false beam ends between floors; paired or grouped windows, joined by a continuous contrasting sill molding; closed porch rails sheathed in clapboard, with a contrasting cap rail; and a hipped extension continuing the roof profile out over the one-story portion of the house. Both the light-and-shadow of clapboard (without corner boards) and the regular rows of shingles in the gable further emphasize the horizontal. A three-sided oriel supported by curved corbels lends surface interest to the facade. Purlins and knee braces occur at window level on the second story and at the cornice line at gable ends. The entry is recessed via a cutaway porch that once wrapped around the south side of the house. The front door is extra wide, with a band of squared lights, and balanced by a large fixed-sash cottage window. All of the windows in the house have a grid of small square lights in the upper sash over larger rectangular single lights. These, and the boxed porch columns, provide the only vertical interest. The current owners added wheelchair ramps to the front and rear entrances.

History: The wide entrance and typical circular bungalow plan of connecting rooms make this house well-suited to its present use as a group home for nonambulatory mentally retarded citizens. Care providers use the two upstairs rooms. Except for the altered porch and wheelchair ramps at the front and back entrances, the house looks much as it did when it was completed in 1913. It was built for Patty and Robert H. Fay, who bought the lot from the Swards at 112 Logan Blvd. for \$1,000 in 1911. Robert Fay was a foreman for the PRR. The Fays moved to California and sold the house to Donald J. Howard, manager of the Altoona Chamber of Commerce, in 1925 for \$10,000. When Howard died in 1966, he left the house to his sister Geraldine, who occupied it along with sisters Augusta and Hilda until her death in 1980. Geraldine left the property to her surviving sisters, Augusta and Marian; Marian sold her half interest to her sister for \$12,500. In 1983 Augusta Howard conveyed the property to Marian's son Richard McNelis and his wife, Alice, for \$10,000 with the proviso that she be allowed to live the remainder of her life in the house. The McNelis's sold the house to the present owners, a Catholic Church-sponsored handicapped care organization, in 1986.

Sources: Sanborns: 1920, 1932, 1951. City directories. Tax records. Deed books: 180/481, 209/562, 331/569, 1057/381, 1093/245, 1123/844. Will books: 137/374, 153/323.

Project Information: This report was part of a larger project to document the city of Altoona, Pennsylvania. The project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER), Robert Kapsch, chief, at the request of America's Industrial Heritage Project (AIHP), Randy Cooley, director. An overview of the history of the city (HABS No. PA-5784) and an overview of Llysven (HABS No. PA-5787) provide context for these buildings as well as a comprehensive list of sources. See also additional HABS reports on buildings in the city and other neighborhoods.

This report was prepared by Kathy Edwards in the summer of 1989 under the supervision of Alison K. Hoagland, HABS historian, and Kim E. Wallace, supervisory historian. Edwards's and other project historians' work was published as Railroad City: Four Historic Neighborhoods in Altoona, Pennsylvania (Washington, D.C.: HABS/HAER, National Park Service, 1990), edited by Kim E. Wallace, supervisory historian, and Sara Amy Leach, HABS historian.